



Pendle Education Trust



Social Media Policy 2026-2027

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Social Media Policy

West Craven High School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff are actively encouraged to use social media as part of their ongoing CPD. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the academy and its staff.

All schools, academies and local authorities have a duty of care to provide a safe learning environment for pupils and staff. Schools/academies and local authorities could be held responsible, indirectly for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. Expectations for teachers' professional conduct are set out in 'Teachers Standards 2012'. Staff members who harass, cyberbully, discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability or who defame a third party may render West Craven High School or Pendle Education Trust liable to the injured party. Reasonable steps to prevent predictable harm must be in place.

Scope

This policy:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

The school respects privacy and understands that staff may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the academy's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the academy (or by extension Pendle Education Trust) or impacts on the academy, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

SLT

- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
- Developing and implementing the Social Media policy.
- Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and



involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.

- Approve professional social media account creation

Administrator / Moderator

- Create the account following SLT approval.
- Store account details, including passwords securely.
 - Be in receipt of the two-factor authentication codes to allow access on new devices.
 - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account.
 - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring).

Staff

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies.
 - Attending appropriate training.
 - Regularly monitor, update and manage content they have posted via academy accounts.
 - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the academy.

Monitoring

Academy accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend or during school holidays) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on an academy social media account.

Behaviour

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. Academy social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.



- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media, staff must refer to SLT, who will follow the Pendle Education Trust media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the academy and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may, take action, according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly



Use of images

Academy use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pupil pictures online other than via academy-owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Pupils should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any academy list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

Staff

- Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
- Personal communications, which do not refer to or impact upon the school, are outside the scope of this policy.
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The academy permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites on personal devices in school, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.



Pupils

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or former pupils of the school (under the age of 18) on any personal social media network account.
- The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media when they are old enough to use it.

Parents/Carers

- If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be required to read and sign an acceptable use agreement.
- The academy has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the academy. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the Principal will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the academy's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the academy.
- The academy should effectively respond to social media comments made by others.

Managing school social media accounts

Only academy-owned devices have access to academy social media accounts. Posts made to academy social media accounts must only come from academy devices.

Staff members posting to academy social media accounts will have undertaken training with the Online Safety leader and will adhere to the following when using academy social media accounts:



The Do's

- Use an appropriate tone.
- Include photographs, ensuring all children have photographic permission and verbal permission from staff pictured has been obtained.
- Check spelling carefully.
- Tag accounts of other parties involved in the activity, with their verbal permission.
- Be respectful to all parties.
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author bearing in mind copyright and / creative commons license.
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, speak to a member of SLT
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of academy accounts.

The Don'ts

- Refer to photographed children by name.
 - Use children's full names where children's names are included (if no photographs have been used).
 - Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the academy into disrepute.
 - Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material.
 - Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation.
 - Don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate or harmful content.
 - Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Don't use social media to air grievances.





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